

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 IO-12 EUR-25 AID-20 RSR-01 NIC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1941

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8914

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MARR, CA, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MAY 21, 1973

THE FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO 21 MAY 73
REPEATED TO YOU FOR YOUR ACTION AND INFO. QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0337

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MARR, CA, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MAY 21, 1973

1. SUMMARY: AN ARVN UNIT CAPTURES SA-7 MISSILES IN CHUONG THIEN.
AN ICCS DELEGATION VISITS A NOW PACIFIED FORMER VC VILLAGE
IN KIEN HOA. GVN FORCES ARE MAKING SLOW PROGRESS IN BAC LIEU
AND BA XUYEN'S SPECIAL PACIFICATION AREA. THE VC CONTINUE
HEAVY PRESSURE ON VINH BINH'S KHMER POPULATION. END
SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: (A) FIGHTING IN MR IV REMAINED AT
NORMAL LEVELS OVER HO CHI MINH'S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND. MAY 18-20
WITNESSED 137 COMMUNIST- INITIATED INCIDENTS, OF WHICH 99 WERE
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ATTACKS BY FIRE. LIKE THE PREVIOUS WEEK, MOST INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE IN CHUONG THIEN. THE VINH LONG/ VINH BINH BORDER ALSO SAW HEAVY FIGHTING. RVNAF LOST 47 MEN OVER THE THREE DAY PERIOD, WITH 307 WOUNDED AND THREE MISSING IN ACTION. REPORTED VC/ NVA CASUALTIES WERE 193 KILLED AND 24 CAPTURED.

(B) CASUALTY FIGURES RELEASED BY MR IV FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 13-19 REFLECT A SLIGHT INCREASE IN THE CASUALTY RATIO FAVORABLE TO THE GVN. REPORTED GOVERNMENT LOSSES FOR THE WEEK WERE 149 KILLED 88 WOUNDED, AND 58 MISSING. VC/ NVA CASUALTIES WERE 356 KILLED AND 48 CAPTURED. THE WEEK PREVIOUS, MR IV REPORTED 188 RVNAF AND 307 COMMUNIST DEAD.

(C) THE CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE CHIEF TOLD THE US PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE THAT ELEMENTS OF THE 21 ST ARVN DIVISION HAVE CAPTURED SIX SA-7 HEAT- SEEKING ANTI- AIRCRAFT MISSILES IN VINH VIEN VILLAGE, KIEN THIEN DISTRICT. THIS IS THE FIRST CONFIRMATION OF SUCH MISSILES IN VC MR III.

(D) TWO ARVN RANGER BATTALIONS WITH ARMOR SUPPORT JOINED CHUONG THIEN'S DEFENDERS MAY 18. THE FORCE, COMPRISING THE 67 TH AND 85 TH BATTALIONS, DEPLOYED IN NORTHERN DUC LONG DISTRICT ON THE KIEN GIANG BORDER. FROM THERE IT WILL OPERATE NORTH OF VI THANH AND INTO KIEN BINH DISTRICT OF KIEN GIANG WHERE VC/ NVA PRESSURE HAS INCREASED GRADUALLY IN THE LAST EIGHT WEEKS (CAN THO 0290 AND 0330).

3. GVN ACTIVITIES: TERRITORIAL FORCES ENGAGED IN A FIVE- WEEK OLD CAMPAIGN ARE CHIPPING AWAY AT VC POSITIONS ALONG THE BA XUYEN- BAC LIEU BORDER. MR IV COMMANDER MGEN NGUYEN VINH NGHI GAVE THE BA XUYEN PROVINCE CHIEF CONTROL OVER A SPECIAL INTER- PROVINCIAL TACTICAL ZONE (SITZ) ON APRIL 10 AND ORDERED HIM TO CLEAN IT OUT IN THIRTY DAYS. THE PROVINCE CHIEF HAS NOT MET THE DEADLINE, BUT HIS TROOPS HAVE ERODED VC STRONGHOLDS IN THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE SITZ. THROUGH A COMBINATION OF SWEEP OPERATIONS, DEFOLIATION, OUTPOST CONSTRUCTION, AND SMALL SCALE POPULATION RELOCATION, THE GVN HAS RELIEVED VC PRESSURE IN HOA TU AND THANH TRI DISTRICTS OF BA XUYEN, AND NORTHEASTERN VINH LOI AND NORTHWESTERN VINH CHAU DISTRICTS IN BAC LIEU. THE DETERIORATING STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KHMER KHROM RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY AND THE GVN, WHICH RESULTED FROM THE ASSASSINATION OF BAC LIEU'S CAMBODIAN RELIGIOUS NOTABLE SON THAL, IS SLOWING PROGRESS IN THE REST OF VINH CHAU DISTRICT AND ALLOWING THE VC TO DEVELOP LOCAL CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCOMMODATIONS.

4. VC ACTIVITY: VINH BINH (A) THE VC CONTINUE HEAVY POLITICAL AND MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE LARGELY KHMER POPULATION OF TRA CU DISTRICT, VINH BINH. PRESSURE BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER THE CEASEFIRE, TAKING THE FORM OF A HEAVY BARRAGE OF CAMBODIAN LANGUAGE PROPAGANDA. THE XOAI XIEM PAGODA INCIDENT

FOLLOWED VC PROSELYTING OF CAMBODIAN RELIGIOUS FIGURES. MORE
RECENTLY WE UNDERSTAND THE VC ARE RECRUITING AN ETHNIC CAMBODIAN
BATTALION (CAN THO 0331). THE AMERICAN PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE
REPORTS THAT VIETUALLY EVERY VILLAGE IS SUBJECT TO NIGHTTIME
VC LOUD SPEAKER PROSELYTING. A COMMUNIST CULTURE- DRAMA
GROUP, WITH SEVERAL CAMBODIAN PLAYERS, PERFORMS TO REPORTEDLY
LARGE AUDIENCES. A VC PUBLIC HEALTH TEAM IS OPERATING IN
NORTHERN TRA CU AND SOUTHERN TIEU CAN DISTRICTS. THE TEAM
EMPLOYS " CA NHAU" A FOLK MEDICINE TECHNIQUE MUCH APPRECIATED
BY CAMBODIANS. THE VC REPORTEDLY INCREASED DISTRICT RICE
TAXES FROM TEN TO FIFTEEN BUSHEL (GIA) PER HECTARE. OTHER
DISTRICTS IN VINH BINH HAVE SHOWN NO INCREASED TAX LEVIES.
(B) THE VC HAVE ALSO INCREASED THEIR MILITARY POTENTIAL
IN TRA CU. THE VC 501 ST LOCAL FORCE BATTALION RECENTLY MOVED INTO
DAI AN VILLAGE FROM TIEU CAN DISTRICT. JOINING IT IS THE 509 TH LOCAL
FORCE BATTALION FROM LONG TOAN DISTRICT, WHICH HAS RECENTLY
REDEPLOYED

IN EASTERN TRA CU AND WESTERN CAU NGANG DISTRICTS.
BARNES UNQUOTE
WHIEHOUSE

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